Oct.r 1755.

PLUNGING

A

Subject of BIGOTRY,

When made essential to

BAPTISM.

BIGOTRY *is an excessive* Fondness *for a Man's own Sentiments, or standing up for this, or the other Set of Opinions, with more Conceit and Eagerness than the Reason and Importance of them require.* —— *True* Zeal *is always* according to Knowledge, *measured by the Moments of Things, and within due Bounds: But* BIGOTRY *is a disproportionate Concern to the Weight of the Matter, and to the Prejudice of some other Truth.*

Occasional Papers, Vol. I. No. 1.

LONDON,

Printed and Sold by M. FENNER, at the *Turk's-Head* in *Gracechurch-Street.* MDCCXLI.

ON

PLUNGING

IN

BAPTISM.

THAT man, who wiſheth well to all men, whoſe good will and kind affections are truly *catholick*, who regards every man as *a creature* of *God*, and from the love he has to him that created, loves him that is created by him; every ſuch man will feel a *painful concern* about the happineſs of others, eſpecially, when he perceives how *firſt principles* loſe their ſpring and moment, by TRIFLES engaging the attention. Men uſually fix on thoſe things as the ſubjects of contentious, angry zeal, which the doctrine of Je-

ſus has propoſed to be the occaſions of *charity*, and a ſuitable means of diſplaying the benevolent affections.

For my own part, I am of opinion, that ſuch miſtaken conduct ſhould be freely examined, and the folly of it, as much as poſſible expoſed.— Nor would I, whilſt cenſuring the bigotry of another, ſhew a temper unworthy the chriſtian character; being fully perſuaded, that neither *ſprinkling*, *pouring*, nor *plunging*, ſhould be looked upon, as ſufficient occaſion of any abatement of my eſteem, love, and brotherly affection. The *modes* of baptiſm ſhould certainly be placed among thoſe *indifferent* things, concerning which, all chriſtians have the liberty either to uſe the one or the other. And in no one inſtance wherein chriſtians may differ, has any perſon the *leaſt right* to judge or cenſure his brother, or to deſpiſe or contemn him.

Let *us not therefore judge one another any more*; but judge this rather, *that no man put a ſtumbling block, or an occaſion to fall in his brother's way.* It is very dangerous to make that *eſſential* or *neceſſary*, either to chriſtian communion, or ſalvation, which the doctrine of Chriſt, and of his apoſtles have not.—

The queſtion before us, is, *what foundation can be diſcovered in ſcripture, for laying any ſtreſs upon* plunging *in baptiſm?*—Nor is the queſtion unreaſonable or impertinent; for, *it is well known,*

known, that there are numbers among us, who will have it, that CHRISTIAN BAPTISM *muſt imply* IMMERSION, *underſtood by ſo plunging in water, as to cover the whole body: and that pouring, or ſprinkling of water on the body, is no baptiſm.*

BUT inaſmuch as theſe perſons muſt allow that the word βαπτιζω is ſometimes uſed, nay, frequently, for *pouring* or *ſprinkling*: and ſince they have no manner of evidence that either *John* the *fore-runner*, or the diſciples of Jeſus, did ſo *plunge and cover* with water, it ſeems wrong to lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon it.

THAT *John*, or the *diſciples* of our Lord did plunge, is not a *clear point*, as ſhall be ſhewn from many places, where the word can intend no more than *pouring* or *ſprinkling*; and likewiſe from thoſe paſſages which are ſaid to prove that *Chriſtian Baptiſm* expreſsly implies *plunging*, i. e. covering all over with water. And,

1. TAKE we notice of ſome of thoſe *Texts*, whch *do* not uſe the word for plunging: and they are as followeth, *Mark* viii. 4.—*And when they come from the market, except they* WASH *they eat not. And many other things they do, which they have received to hold, as the waſhing,* [βαπτισμες,] *of cups and pots, brazen veſſels, and of tables.* In the *firſt* inſtance, it is not *probable* that they plunged themſelves, and cover'd their whole bodies with water, before they eat;—and in the

the *latter*, tho' they might plunge their pots and cups, and brazen veſſels, yet it is not likely they ſhould plunge their *beds*; for ſo the word rendred tables (χλινῶν) is generally underſtood.—Of this *variety* of baptiſms, we have mention made, *Heb.* ix. 10. *and divers baptiſms.*—Βαπτισμοις —which *waſhings* or *baptiſms* are after notified, as being only *perfuſions* or *ſprinklings*; ſee *ver.* 13, 19, 21. ſuch as, *ſprinkling* the unclean with the blood of bulls, *&c.* and *ſprinkling* the book and the people with the blood of calves, and of goats, *&c.* and the tabernacle and veſſels *ſprinkled* with blood: theſe belong to the Διαφοροις βαπτισμοις, the *divers waſhings* or *baptiſms.* So that the word is evidently uſed for *pouring* or *ſprinkling*, and cannot here either intend or allow of plunging.

Again, we are told, 1 *Cor.* x. 2. *that the Iſraelites were all batized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea.* But ſure none will ſay, *that they were all plunged.*—That was not their baptiſm, but the baptiſm of the *Egyptians*; for ſo *Caſtellio—obruti ſunt mari & plumbi ritu in aquas nobiles demerſi*, Exod. xv. 10. the ſea ruſhed in upon them, and like lead did they plunge or ſink in the mighty waters!—

The ſame word is uſed, as ſignifying to *tinge* or *colour* with baptizing; *Rev.* xix. 13. And he was clothed with a veſture *dipt* in blood,—βεβαμμενον—but even here, when one would ſuppoſe *the waſhing* did require moſt time to *ſtain*, *tinge*

tinge or *colour* it, it intends not plunging; but is an evident alluſion to the lxiii[d] of *Iſaiah*, the beginning; and by a lively ſimilitude of a *great general* returning from the ſlaughter of his enemies, with his garments ſtained, and ſprinkled over with the blood of the ſlain; ſo is the *Lamb of God* deſcribed—but *generals* don't uſe to plunge and imbrue their garments in blood.—

In theſe places, the *word* does not neceſſarily imply *baptiſm* underſtood as plunging: but on the contrary, it intimates baptiſm by *pouring*, or *ſprinkling*, or *partial* waſhing.

To get rid of the force of this objection againſt plunging, it ſhould be ſhewn that the word, *baptizo*, when expreſſing the *chriſtian rite*, has as many places where it neceſſarily implies *plunging*; or, at leaſt, it ought to be ſhewn, that in ſome *one* place it implies an *abſurdity*, to underſtand it otherwiſe.—But, till this is done, let none who contend for *plunging*, boaſt that they have the *infallibly* right ſenſe of the word, in their practice; and that all who differ from them, are in the wrong.

Under this head, I ſhall make a citation of what Dr. Potter has obſerv'd, concerning the practice of *waſhing*, among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; *viz.* "That the ancient *Greeks* had "no *Balneos* like thoſe of later times—but had "a large baſon or veſſel to waſh in—and that "likewiſe the ancient *Romans* had a veſſel in "their

" their own houſes, wherein they waſhed, " call'd *lavatrina*, or *latrina*, which was after- " wards termed *balneum*.—That the *Greeks* " had, among other rooms in their *Balneos*, " one called *Baptiſteriön*, which was an *hot* " *Bath*; and another, *Loutrón*, which was a " *cold Bath*."——And as to the *times* of their bathing; " *they uſually bathed* (he tells us) after " *war*, *journeyings*, or any *fatigue*.—And that " after bathing, it was the cuſtom both in " *Greece* and *other hot countries*, to ANOINT " the body." But as to their *decency* of bathing, " in the heroical ages, men and women, " without diſtinction, bathed themſelves in " rivers *".

BUT more modeſt were the *primitive chriſtians*, ſays Dr. *Cave*, for when they were brought to the *font*, and were firſt *ſtripped of their garments* (intimating thereby *their putting off the old man which is corrupt with his deceitful luſts*) and that all occaſions of ſcandal and immodeſty might be prevented in ſo ſacred an action, the men and women were baptized in their diſtinct *apartments*, the women having Deaconneſſes to attend them, to undreſs and dreſs them, to ſtand about and overſhadow them that nothing of indecency might appear. †

WE

* *See his* Antiq. *of* Greece, *Vol.* ii. *p.* 370, 372.

† Cave's Prim. Chriſtianity. *Part* i. *pag.* 317.

WE *are next to attend to those texts of scripture on which so much stress is laid about* PLUNGING *in baptism.*

AND all persons, even the least acquainted with the controversy, know, that the practice of *John* the Harbinger, is urg'd. It is said, *Matt.* iii. 11. that *John* baptized with water unto repentance, but that the *Messias* should baptize with the *Holy Spirit and fire.* Compare *Mark* i. 8. *Luke* iii. 16. *John* i. 33. All which texts agree in their description of this doctrine of *John*'s, and of our Lord's baptism. Now, if *baptizing*, when applied to *John*, *necessarily* signified plunging over head in water, and covering the whole body; what must the word import, when applied to our Lord's baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire?—Must we in the *one* case suppose covering *all over* with water, *necessary*, as the cleansing rite: and not suppose that the *other* method of purification should be alike extensive?—but, it was certainly sufficient that the Holy Spirit descending like an hovering flame upon Jesus, and upon the heads of the apostles and first christians, was all the apparent or external application or symbol, which mark'd out the *separated* persons. And why should not *pouring* water on the head of our Lord by *John* the Baptist, determine *John*'s baptism to be *valid*, as well as our Lord's only *sprinkling* with the Spirit, or, by an effusion of pointed flame on the heads of his apostles

and witneſſes of his reſurrection, for this reaſon be called, a *baptiſm*; and be eſteemed valid; tho' he did not *dip* or *plunge* men over head in the Spirit?—An unprejudic'd mind will find it very difficult to diſcern the reaſon of ſuch difference. But if we were to look for ANALOGY, or reſemblance between *John*'s applying water, and the viſible token of the Spirit *coming* upon *Jeſus*, we ſhould be inclined to conclude, that *John* had not plunged Jeſus, but only poured water upon his head, to whichthe dove-like deſcent or pouring of the Spirit anſwered.—The *fondneſs* thoſe Gentlemen ſhew for *analogy*, in mode, will vindicate ſuch an interpretation in the caſe before us, and ſhew it to be, *at leaſt*, *argumentum ad hominem*.

As to *John*'s chuſing to baptize in *Enon*, becauſe *there was much water*, John iii. 23. this does not ſeem to carry any thing in it that will be *concluſive* on the ſide of dipping, or plunging.—It may be otherways accounted for, as, there being *many waters*, ſtreams, or rivulets, would render it more convenient and commodious for *John* and his diſciples; foraſmuch as thereby they had it in their power to be *all* employed in baptizing the crowds who came from *Jeruſalem*, and the country around them. And as to the *much*, or *great*, or *deep* water, if we conſider whereabouts it was that *John* baptized, or if we regard the wilderneſs of *Judah*, as dry and thirſty, *Pſal.* lxiii. 1. *i. e.* not

not very well stored with waters, it will follow, that whatever the wilderness was where *John* baptized, the *much*, or *great*, or *deep* may be understood in a *comparative* view, and will afford us nothing conclusive. But suppose (for supposition sake) that the ὑδατα πολλα, intended to hint to us the *depth* of the waters, or intended a *large* river, like the *Euphrates*; or should we stretch our imagination so far, as to think it might intimate the *roaring of an high sea*, as in other places *, we should only by this means render it more difficult to account for their *safety* in going into it; and for their capacity of performing the *religious rite*, when in it.——

Besides, tho' the waters of *Enon* were allowedly deep enough for *plunging*, and large enough to accommodate the crowds that came to be wash'd in them; is it not strange, that no *hint* should ever be *once* let fall, that might inform us whether the baptized *quitted* their clothes, or went in with them on.—Surprizing! that not one word should ever express or intimate that they were actually *plunged*; or that they were plunged *naked*, or in *garments*.—If they were not plunged, but only stept into the rivulet, in order to have some water poured upon them, there is no difficulty would arise from this *silence*; because we are inform'd of the nature of their *dress*, which would easily admit of such practice without much trouble, or inconvenience.

* *Dr.* Doddridge's Fam. Expos. *Vol.* i. *pag.* 159.

Nor ſhould any ſay, that this is too mean a circumſtance to be taken notice of, for the *decency* or *indecency* of the rite would depend upon it, if *plunging*, and eſpecially plunging naked † was eſſential to chriſtian baptiſm.

Under this head, which reſpects mens uneaſy ſcruples about the *quantity* of water; we might expect that the *tender conſcience* ſhould be as much, nay *more* ſolicitous about its *quality*, that is to ſay, whether it ſhould be *hard* or *ſoft*, *freſh* or *ſalt*, *ſpring* or *pond*, *river* or *ſea* water.——

It is not ſufficient that *John* baptized in *Enon*, where were much or many waters, unleſs we know the *quality* of them. They might be running waters or ſtanding pools: or they might be *wells* that had been ſunk there for the convenience of cattle. And if the *many* or *much* waters ſhould allude to the roaring of an high ſea, they might be *ſalt* waters.

But in reply, it may be ſaid, that the *Jayler* could not be ſuppos'd to have any *ſalt* or *ſea water* in his houſe; and therefore, we may ſuppoſe that it was *freſh* water. Grant it; it does not yet appear whether it was *running* or *ſtanding* water that he had laid in, any more than what quantity. And methinks if either quality or quantity was of importance, one would have expected

† Cave's Prim. Chriſtianity. *P.* i. *pag.* 317. *as before.*

expected much clearer hints concerning the *quality*; becauſe, this ſeems to deſerve in its own nature a *firſt* regard: for ſuppoſing a man would apply an inſtituted baptiſmal *rite* as a ſymbol of purity, and was ſo ſituated that he could not have water ſufficient to *plunge*, but what was foul and muddy, as from ſtanding and unwholſome lakes; and he could, at the ſame time, be able to come at a clear and ſweet ſpring, that would admit of his applying the pure element only by *pouring* or *ſprinkling*, any ſtander-by would be able to diſcern the *aptneſs* of the *latter* ſymbol in a light much preferable to the *former*.

But, that neither *quantity* nor *quality* is eſſential to chriſtian baptiſm, is deducible from the *ſilence* of the ſacred hiſtorians: for even *Lydia* herſelf and her houſhold, tho' baptized after prayer by the river-ſide, are not ſaid to have gone into it, or to have been plung'd in it. Nay, their *not being ſaid to have gone into it*, probably may intimate that it was a *deep* river, and not ſo fit for baptiſm as the many waters, or rivulets, or wells, where *John* baptized.—The *mark* or *note* of plunging, from *their going down into the water, and coming up out of it*, is quite loſt in the caſe of *Lydia*, and the inſtance of the *Jayler* will only ſuffer a warm imagination to invent plunging.

But I proceed to conſider the ſtrength of ſome of their chief fortreſſes.—And the greateſt

ſtreſs

ſtreſs ſeems to be laid on the *two* following paſſages of ſcripture, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. and *Col.* ii. 12.— The *firſt* is, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. *Know ye not that ſo many of us as were baptiſed into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptiſed into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.*

BAPTIZING *into Chriſt*, all muſt allow to be a *figure*, and to intend no more than baptizing into an open profeſſion of his doctrine: but the author of it having been crucified, the doctrine which the apoſtles and firſt chriſtians profeſſed, was that of a *crucified Jeſus*. For *grace*, or *favour*, reigneth thro' righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by this crucified Jeſus; tho' *ſin*, or the *one offence* had reigned unto death, ſee *chap.* v. 9, 10, 12 and 21 *ver.* compared. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death*; i. e. into this doctrine of the croſs. But what was this? ſee *ver.* 10. *In that he died, he died unto ſin once.* Now, *ſin* had no manner of place in him, ſtripped of a figure: but his dying unto ſin *once*, muſt intend his willing ſubjection to the curſe of that *poſitive* law, *in the day thou eateſt*, &c. which had denounced death upon the humane family. *Death* was not impoſed on him as a *demerit*, but as the body which he took upon him was humane, and ſo capable of *mortality*, he, agreeable to his miſſion, gave up his life a ſacrifice to the

ſin

ſin and rage of men; *he died unto ſin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* And the *privilege* we are initiated into, by *baptiſm*, ſhews us a moſt reconciling view of our perilous ſtate; ſince death is deſtroyed by his dying *once*, or, once ſubmitting to death; *for in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.—And if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we* SHALL *alſo be in the likeneſs of his reſurrection*, ver. 5. That this cannot intend any reſemblance from the *baptiſmal water*, ſeems evident; becauſe, then it would have been rendered, we alſo *have* been in *the likeneſs* of his reſurrection, when *riſing out of the water*, and not we alſo *ſhall* be.——

THE being *planted in the likeneſs of his death*, don't ſeem to intend the being *plunged in water*, as ſuch plunging bears no reſemblance to his *death*, or *crucifixion*; for there, the blood which came from his *head*, *hands*, *feet*, and *ſide*, did not imbrue his whole body, or cover it, as a body immerſed or plunged in water. Nor does a *likeneſs of his reſurrection* ſtand imag'd by the *riſing out* of the water. It evidently refers to what is *future*, and has for its antecedent *our* (the apoſtles) ſo being *planted together* in the likeneſs of his death, as to be intereſted in the *atonement*, to be juſtified by his blood. *Knowing this, that our* OLD *man*, (or this animal life) *is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin; for he that is dead, is freed*

freed from ſin; which expreſſions ſeem to refer to *our* (the apoſtle's) being ſecure of life, tho' the body muſt be diſſolved. And, notwithſtanding *our being dead with Chriſt*, ſubject to die once as well as Chriſt, yet *we are aſſured of life with him*; foraſmuch, as he being raiſed from the dead, *dieth no more*; *death has no more dominion over him. And tho' this mortal* BODY *of ours muſt be deſtroyed, yet, henceforth,* (μηκετι, non amplius,) *yet* no more *ſhallwe be ſubject to its dominion*; *when like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, we alſo ſhall walk in newneſs of life*, ver. 4.

APPLYING the phraſe, *walk in newneſs of life*, to a future ſtate of exiſtence, I imagine, may be defended, from its being the only ſtate in which we can reſemble Chriſt, conſidered as *raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father.* And if we keep our eye upon *ſin ſtill reigning to death*, ch. v. ver. 21. *notwithſtanding the abounding grace of God in Jeſus*; we may then underſtand the queſtion directly put upon this, *ch.* vi. *ver.* 1. to have reſpect to *ſin's reigning unto death*; and, conſequently, we may look upon St. *Paul* as uſing a *metonymy*, putting the *cauſe* for the *effect*, *ſin* for *death*: hereupon the queſtion will be underſtood thus; *ſhall we continue under the reign of ſin, under death, that grace may abound? far from it*; *this is every way inconſiſtent: ſome of us are dead to ſin, how after this ſhall we live in it?* or, *be under its dominion.* And the manner

ner of our being dead to ſin, ye know; *viz.* our *being* [emphatically] *baptized into Chriſt's death.*

If this rendring be juſt, then *the walking in newneſs of life*, would fitly be expreſſive of the *after-ſtate*, or of a reſurrection from the dead, in reſemblance of Chriſt's *being raiſed from the dead, by the glory of the Father.*

I have found the word, *newneſs*, but twice uſed in the New Teſtament, *i. e.* here, and chap. vii. 6. There it is joined to Spirit, *newneſs of Spirit*, and refers to their being dead to the *Moſaic* law, as become the ſubjects of a *new conſtitution.*—No impropriety then appears in St. *Paul*'s expreſſing himſelf thus, with reference to the *ſtate* he ſhould be in, *when raiſed up from the dead, like to his Lord:* foraſmuch, as his walking in *newneſs of life*, would ſuit the *reſtitution* or re-creating of all things, the *new* body, the *reſurrection* body, and the *new* heavens and *new* earth in which dwells righteouſneſs.——

Besides, *ver.* 15. ſeems to ſhew, that the queſtion put, *ver.* 1. refers to our (the Apoſtle's) ſubjection to death, rather than to his continuing the *ſlave* of ſin, or vice. And this ſenſe may be confirm'd from *ver.* 14. for he had declared, that ſin ſhould not have dominion over the converts, no more than over him, becauſe *they were not under the law but*

under grace. Upon the mention of which, he sees a *perverse* question arising in their minds, *viz.* Whether this would be a *toleration* or *license for their sinning?* and he answers, *far from it.*——

He must then in this *former* part of the chapter, have *death*, and not *transgression* in view; and *security* from death, as obtain'd by the *death* and *resurrection* of Jesus; or, his argument through the whole chapter will seem very *indistinct* and *confused.*——

Thus the apostle appears, to me, to be describing the *high advantages* secured to the christian, who has embraced the doctrine of his Lord, whom he before has been placing in contrast with the first *Adam*; and therein shewn, that the benefits *confer'd* by Jesus, are of an infinitely superior nature, to those *lost* by the first *Adam.* So that although the questions are put, *ver.* 1, 2. viz. *Whether we shall continue in sin, that grace may abound? And how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?* Yet, if understood of *vice*, the direct answer to these questions appears not to take place, till *ver.* 11, 12. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof.*—But if from *ver.* 3. to *ver.* 11. be understood as an immediate answer to the questions

tions put, *ver.* 1, 2. the ſenſe and reaſoning will perhaps be plain and intelligible, ſhould we apply the paragraph *to the apoſtles*, who were, in an high ſenſe, *baptized into Chriſt's death!* as may be illuſtrated from ſuch paſſages as theſe, *Matth.* xx. 23. *Ye ſhall indeed drink of my cup, and be batized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with.*—In which ſort of *baptiſms*, St. *Paul* ſays, he had often been; *in deaths often*, 2 Cor. xi. 23.—*I die daily*, 1 Cor. xv. 31. And how many converts to Chriſtianity (ſays Dr. *S. Clarke*) in the primitive ages, before they could be baptized, were carried immediately to *martyrdom?* yet no one doubted, but their dying *literally* with and for Chriſt, was more than equivalent to their being *figuratively* buried with him by baptiſm into death.—*Serm.* Vol. vii. *pag.* 253.

But upon the *cuſtom* and *practice* of the primitive ages, ſubſequent to the apoſtles, I lay no ſtreſs.—

Sufferings and *death* for the cauſe of Chriſt were a proper *baptiſm*, as the efficacy of Chriſt's doctrine was very ſignificantly *exhibited* by ſuch death and ſufferings.

Besides, there ſeems to be a great agreement between the reaſoning of St. *Paul* here, and in that xv^th^ of 1^ſt^ *Cor.* *There*, he had been aſſerting the foundation of the chriſtian's hopes of a reſurrection to eternal life, upon

Christ's being *risen*, and become the *first fruits* of them that sleep; and *that since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, ver. 20, 21, 22. And then he takes notice of the *exaltation* of Jesus: but at *ver.* 29. he draws this inference; *else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?* and in *ver.* 31, 32. he mentions his *own* perils. After that, he expatiates upon the nature of the resurrection; and concludes the chapter with an exhortation to his *brethren*, to be stedfast.—A *parallel* to this, we have in *Rom.* v. and vi.—We are then to consider St. *Paul*, as having, in chap. v. represented *Adam* and *Christ* in contrast, and shewed the great advantage that the *mediation* of Jesus introduc'd; — and in chap. vi. representing the *certainty* of the doctrine, as built upon the resurrection of Jesus, and his *dying no more*. Hence, it is not at all *unnatural* for him to mention himself, as being *buried* with Christ in baptism; and to keep in his eye the *security* of immortal life which he had through him,—and *after this*, to enforce the doctrine upon christians.

Nor can we suppose St. *Paul* to have laid any manner of stress upon the *mode* of water-baptism here; since we find him, 1 *Cor.* i. 14. *and*

and onward, glorying, that had he *baptized* but few; and that baptism was of *small importance* compared with the preaching of the gospel; *for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*

THE other passage of Scripture on which so much stress is laid, is, *Col.* ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with* him, *through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

HERE the *advocates for plunging* would have it, that this must refer to the rite of *water-baptism*; to our being *covered* with water, or *buried* with him in it; and to our rising again out of it, as answering to his resurrection. But the *wherein also*, is not just; for the same phrase is rendred, *ver.* 11. *In whom also*, ἐν ᾧ καὶ—*In whom also you are risen together*; *and the burying with him*, confirms this rendring. So that if we attend to the argument, it can intend *no more* than that by baptism, they professed to embrace the christian doctrine, and to renounce *Judaism*, and all *pagan* and *idoletrous rites* and *customs*; for the twentieth verse is a comment upon this; *if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world*—this is the being *buried with him.* But it cannot refer to the rite of *water-baptism*, intimating, as some would have it, a *plunging* or *covering over* with water, as Christ was by *John* in *Jordan.* For, it is not probable that

that *John* did plunge our Lord; but if he did, and that this was the custom of the *Jews*, in their *baptism*, yet this *burying with Christ in baptism*, can by no means refer to that *resemblance* of him; for, he remain'd a *conformist* to Judaism in many respects till he had fulfilled his ministry; and the *hand-writing of ordinances*, he took not out of the way, till he nailed them to his *cross!* so that being *dead with him* from the *rudiments of the world*, or being *buried with him* in baptism, as it here respects an absolute freedom from all the carnal ordinances of *Jew* or *Gentile*, must have reference to the death or cross of Christ. And *baptism* being the external sign of mens acknowledging his doctrine and mission, would presuppose and include their being dead with him to these rudiments, tho' they had no more than a *small* quantity of water applied by *infusion*, *aspersion*, or *pouring*.

FARTHER, if *plunging* in water must be understood in these places; I should ask, who we have now that are the *proper subjects* of baptism? none, unless they be *Jews*, who throw off Judaism; or *Gentiles*, who renounce idolatry; or men, who have lived under the *dominion* of sin. Men cannot, with any propriety, be *plunged* in order to shew their being *dead* and *buried* from that they never indulged, embraced, or submitted to; and how they can be *buried with Christ* from sin, or from the *Mosaic* law, in baptism, I know not.

The

The bleſſed Jeſus was without ſpot, and had no guile. And the Jewiſh ordinances he died not unto at his baptiſm, they were nailed to his croſs, and blotted out there, not by *immerſion*, but rather by *aſperſion*.——

FARTHER, as the word *baptizo*, is capable of different ſenſes, and has been differently applied by the *ſacred writers* themſelves, we might reaſonably have expected ſome *expletive*, that ſhould have faſten'd down the ſenſe to *plunging*: ſo that when uſed concerning the *chriſtian rite* of water-baptiſm, none might by the ambiguity of the word, be led into any doubt concerning it. And certainly if the thing had been of *importance*, this would have been done. But as the ſtrong term of *burying*, very probably, has no reference to water-baptiſm, when annexed to the word *baptiſma*, it will by no means lend us any *aid* in determining its ſignification, on the ſide of plunging.

NAY, ſhould we imagine that the word there intended *plunging*, we ſhould be difficultly ſet to find out the *moral* or *ſpiritual* meaning of the mode. For as applied now, few *Jews* renounce Judaiſm, or are plung'd. *Many*, I doubt not among chriſtians that are plung'd, have had no habits of vice to renounce; have no *new* religion to make a public profeſſion of, and openly to embrace, but

but have been all their days *putting on Chriſt*, without making proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil its luſts. How theſe are *buried* with Chriſt in baptiſm, to ſin, and how they riſe in it to *newneſs* of life, is difficult to diſcover. They have had no *putting off* the old man, with his deeds, which are corrupt.——And if we ſhould underſtand it as referring to the doctrine of a *dead* and *riſen* Jeſus, our being plung'd in water has no manner of reſemblance with it. The manner of his deſcending into *Hades* ſeems to have nothing in it *imitable* by us; unleſs our actual diſſolution be. Nor can *riſing out of the water* convey any *ſimilar* idea to his reſurrection, the *manner* or *modus* of which, was *hid* from the obſervation of all men.

THE moſt then, that can poſſibly be made of theſe *texts*, as ſuppoſing the practice of *plunging*, is, that if they do reſpect *water-baptiſm*, they are nothing more than an ALLUSION to that *mode* of dipping or plunging. They enter not into the *nature* of an INSTITUTION; but only expreſs the *manner* in which they baptized, in thoſe hot countries.——They can intend no more, for even where the *order* is given for the diſciples *to go and baptize*, not one word is ſaid about *all* nations being *dipped* or *plunged*; nor that any *one* nation ſhould; no, nor any *one* perſon. *Families*, we find, whole *houſeholds* baptized together. One houſehold baptized in their

their own houſe; but no *quantity* of water mentioned.——But ſhould we underſtand the *burying with Chriſt in baptiſm*, Rom vi. to refer to St. *Paul* in his own perſon, as it ſeems probable it muſt be ſo refer'd, then we ſhould expect to have had ſome account of his having been plung'd himſelf, *Acts* ix. 18. at his baptiſm: whereas we have not *one word* about it, nor of his going out of the houſe of *Judas* to receive his baptiſm, in his weak and infirm condition.——

ONCE *more*; ſhould we grant that the chriſtian baptiſmal rite was adminiſtred by *plunging*; as this *mode* of the *rite* would be ſuitable to an hot climate; it will not thence follow, that 'tis ſuitable to a cold one. None will pretend that a *rite* can loſe the *nature of a rite*. And if it cannot, then *the change of circumſtances*, will render it *fit* or *unfit*. Inſtances of which ſort of rites the Jewiſh ſtate abounded with.—Their waſhings, and purifications, numbers of them, would have had no fitneſs or ſuitableſs in them in a cold climate.—They were *local*, tho' poſitive inſtitutions, and tended to their health; preſerving them more free from infectious diſtempers.—But as great care was taken, by their laws, to preſerve modeſty and chaſtity of body among them, as well as cleanlineſs and health, we cannot ſuppoſe that their *bathings* were promiſcuous. So that

the difficulty will *recoil* upon us, if we imagine that the *crowds* of the first converts were *dipped*, or *plunged* in baptism. For, inasmuch as we have no account of women baptizing of the women, and of men baptizing only the men, it would have brought an early reproach upon the christian *rite*, if *plunging* had been the practice.

LEST it should be thought that *Tit.* iii. 5. was wilfully pass'd over, because of its weight, I shall *add* it here;—*according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration.* Λέτρον, *lavacrum*, if strictly rendred, should be the *washing-place* of regeneration, or the *bath* of regeneration. But who sees not that here the figure is exceedingly high.—The PLACE wherein we are washed, does not surely, in any proper sense, contribute to our salvation. If it did, then there would be a *material* cause produceing an *immaterial* and spiritual effect.—— The *Romanists* have indeed shewn us, in many astonishing instances, to what extravagancies our laying stress on *modes* and *rituals* may carry us.—

THUS the texts lie, in my view; if I mistake them, it is after some pains taken to understand the true sense of them; nor would my mistaking their direct sense help the argument, for, as I have already observed,

ſerved, ſhould they allude to the *mode* of baptiſm; they will conclude nothing farther, than that plunging in baptiſm was uſed in an hot country. They can no way recommend or enforce the *mode* upon us,—— unleſs it could be proved that a greater *quantity* of water makes a ſtronger impreſſion upon the *moral temper* of the mind, and has a greater aptitude to make men *die to ſin, and live to God,* than a leſſer quantity of water has. —

MOREOVER, here might be ſubjoined a *preſumptive* argument againſt plunging; and that is, that ſince plunging was *common* to bathing, it is not probable that it ſhould be adopted as the *mode* of a *ſacred rite.* We know that eating bread and drinking wine, in the common *uſage* of it, *i. e.* ſo as to make a meal, or to ſatisfy hunger and thirſt, was not permitted in the other *chriſtian rite,* but looked upon by St. *Paul* as a *profanation* of the Supper; 1 *Cor.* xi. 20, 21, 22. And if *analogy* might here take place, then to plunge in baptiſm would be no other than a *profane uſe* of water; it having been the *common way* of bathing.— This argument againſt plunging, ſeems to have as firm a *baſis*, as moſt, if not all that are brought for it: none of them riſing much, if any, above preſumption.—

BUT it is farther ſaid, by the advocates for plunging, *that going down into the water, and coming up out of the water,* do imply

immersion, *Acts* viii. 38, 39. —— Was this the case; it would prove *too much*; for both *Philip* and the *Eunuch*, are said to do so: and if it implies *plunging*, then *Philip* was plung'd as well as the *Eunuch*. But there being nothing that will account for the fitness of *Philip*'s being plung'd, we must not imagine that *going down into the water, and coming up out of it*, are expressions which intimate plunging.

BESIDES, the prepositions εἰς and ἐκ, rendred *into*, and *out of*, are as justly rendred *to*, and *from*. Tho', allowing that the country was a land of hills, and of valleys, and that the springs run among the valleys, *Deut.* xi. 11. *Psal.* civ. 10. it is a very natural rendring, *going down to, and coming up from, or out of.*

ADD we to this, that the circumstance of *dipping* or *plunging*, don't appear to have the advantage of *pouring* or *sprinkling* in the sacred text. Nor is *one* or the *other* form or mode at all essential to *baptism*, consider'd as a *christian rite*, neither is it probable it should have any force given it, forasmuch as the other christian rite, *viz.* the *Lord's Supper*, is left to be *discretionally* administred; no *form* or *posture* of administration being appointed — unless, we make the *posture* of our Lord, and of his apostles essential, as an *authoritative precedent*; and then, I question, whether

whether any part of the chriſtian church has the *eſſentials* of that ordinance. For it is generally agreed to have been inſtituted in a *reclining* poſture; our Lord and his diſciples *leaning upon each other*. But— why men ſhould take the liberty of differing from our Lord in the method and form of celebrating *one* poſitive rite, without making any the leaſt difficulty of it; and yet make the circumſtances of the *other* to give the very *eſſence* of the *rite*, is very unaccountable.—It cannot be pretended, that baptiſm is a *more ſolemn* ordinance than the *ſupper*; — moſt, if not all chriſtians have agreed to carry *the Euchariſt* rather beyond *, than to leave it ſo much upon a *level* with baptiſm. Of thoſe who are the moſt earneſt and ſolicitous to make important the *modes* of baptiſm, ſome of them have *taken great liberties* in their celebration of the Euchariſt.— And as to the *poſture*; none of them, I believe, make a conſcience of reclining on *ſquabbs* or *beds* when receiving the elements. ——

Besides, it is remarkable in the inſtitution of the *Euchariſt*, that the *quantity* either of bread or wine is not ſpecified; what reaſon then have we to imagine that the *quantity* of water applied in baptiſm, ſhou'd be determin'd as of importance, [when not *one word*

* *With what reaſon I do not here enquire.*

word has been ſaid about it in all the ſacred writings,] any more than that the quantity of bread and wine, ſhould be diſcretionally left to communicants?—

BUT *if after all*, it ſhould be granted, that poſſibly the apoſtles baptized by *immerſion*; ſince this is not any where, either by expreſs account, or by indubitable conſequence, the *voice of revelation*, that they did; *much leſs*, ſince there is not any ſtreſs at all laid upon it, it appears no way incumbent on us, who live in a *different climate*, and cloth after a *different manner*, that we ſhould practiſe *immerſion*.—It cannot become our duty, unleſs it was a matter of *clear revelation*. For nothing can demand our conformity to it, as the appointment, or as the will of Chriſt, but what the revelation makes plain to be ſo.

IT will therefore be greatly injurious to the *credit*, and *dignity* of the REVELATION ſhould we ſuppoſe that the *mode* muſt be neceſſary and eſſential to baptiſm; even ſo eſſential as that the *validity* of it is deſtroyed by the want of plunging.——Had this been the caſe, and that any important conſequences depended upon it, it would expreſs *great defect* either of wiſdom or faithfulneſs, or of both, not only in the apoſtles, but in our Lord himſelf.—*On the contrary*, it is

is *certain*, that there is no one place, which has laid any weight upon it; nay, ſo far from any thing being built upon it, it has no *plain* and *evident* foundation in all the Holy Scriptures. And in cool thought and reflection, ſuch *perſons* muſt ſee great reaſon for abating their zeal, who have ventured to make the *want of baptiſm itſelf in any form a damnable* ſin: foraſmuch as ſuch *exceed* the ſentence pronounc'd by the SON OF GOD, *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Not a ſyllable of the want of baptiſm, as the reaſon of damnation.—And wiſely has our Lord left out the *baptiſmal rite* in the denunciation; *yea*, and very friendly too, to great numbers of profeſſors among *plunging Baptiſts*, who have died out of this world, *believers in Chriſt*, and yet have remained unbaptized. For, I doubt not, but many thouſands have received Chriſt, and his words, who have never *been* able to diſcern the importance of water-baptiſm; perſons, who have been taught ſuperſtitiouſly, to apply ideas to it, which in the nature of things, never did, never can belong to it.

IT is yet a thing *unprov'd*, that the apoſtles of our Lord were ever batized with any baptiſm, except that of *John*. Tho' it is probable, that ſeveral of them had received

ceived that; of some, it is manifest that they had been *John*'s disciples, *John* i. 37. Of *Matthew* indeed we have no traces, that I can find, of his having been a disciple of *John*'s. Our Lord *called* him, when sitting at the *receipt of custom*, Mark ix. 9. And in chap. x. 3. we find him *numbred* among the *twelve apostles*, without any intervening account of his baptism, or any intimations of his having been a *disciple* of the Baptist. Moreover, it is never said that our Lord baptized any with water, unless *John* iii. 12. should be so understood. But when we compare chap. iv. 2. we find no way of reconciling these places, but by understanding the former passage, either of our Lord's baptizing with the Spirit, or of his continuing with his disciples in *Judea*, whilst they baptized with water.——

It was perhaps sufficient, and answered all the ends of baptism, that the apostles of our Lord constantly attended him, and openly professed their adherence to him. As this had the *moral design* of baptism contained in it.—

Besides, baptism is not essential to mens being disciples of Jesus, for we have instances upon record of men being *believers in Christ*, and receiving the *gifts of the Spirit*, to whom christian baptism *had never* been applied, *Acts* x. 44.——But who dare

dare be ſo preſumptuous, as to ſay, that had theſe died before the baptiſmal water had been applied, they would have been damned? — or that the baptiſmal water would have ſecured their ſalvation?

THE RITE, if underſtood rightly, does not purify the ſubject with regard to God or Jeſus; but is primarily deſigned to affect and influence others. In the early ages, it was (applied to adult perſons) to be a publick and open acknowledgment of mens believing the goſpel.——

UPON *the whole*, How dangerous a part do thoſe perſons act, who upon ſuch unwarranted foundations make *plunging* eſſential to baptiſm: and not only ſo, but make baptiſm by plunging eſſential to ſalvation! — It is very dangerous to *narrow* or *enlarge* the foundation laid by Chriſt. The apoſtles themſelves never had authority to do it; they durſt not preach up any thing as *eſſential*, that Chriſt had not declared to be ſo. Nor do I know of any one principle of faith that is fundamental, or requiſite to denominate a man a *chriſtian*, more than that, of believing that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, or that he is *the ſent of God.* 1 John iv. 2. *Every ſpirit that confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God.*

NOR of any thing that is fundamental in practice, in order to ſalvation, but that of forming the temper and conduct by the doctrine and example of our Lord. — *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them*, John xiii. 17.

THESE may be built upon, as *fundamentals*, though men differ about RITES; their *modes* and *forms* of being adminiſtred; *eſpecially*, when no explicite rule or canon is delivered about them.

HE is to all intents and purpoſes a *chriſtian*, and entitled to ſalvation, who wanders not from the *rule*; who makes nothing binding, that the goſpel has not made binding, and nothing *looſing* which the goſpel has not made looſing. Though he ſhould imagine *plunging* preferable to pouring; or *pouring* preferable to plunging.——

BUT whoever, in either caſe, is ſo bigoted, as to make his *mode* eſſential, has thereby deviated from the goſpel rule; has brought in *offences*; has introduced *uncharitableneſs*; and lies expoſed hereupon to a terrible ANATHEMA! foraſmuch, as he cannot be a true chriſtian, who ſaps and deſtroys the Spirit of the religion of Jeſus; which is CHARITY. And he may be aſſured, that that principle

principle or practice *in* and *about* which good men may and do differ, cannot possibly enter into the essence of *truth* or *piety*.——

But, by the law of charity, we may judge there are *fifty* to *one* among us of good men, who have not thought plunging at all requisite or essential to baptism; *ergo*, ———

FINIS.